

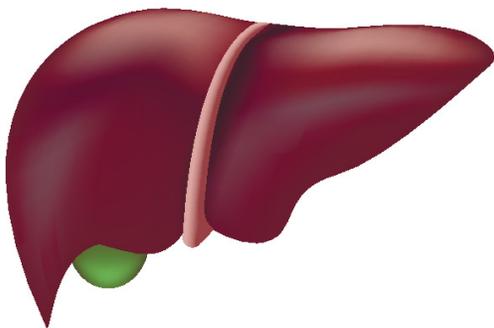
Keeping Your Liver Healthy

Liver disease

Liver disease is caused by damage to the liver. Liver damage can be caused by many things:

- Viruses (such as hepatitis B or C)
- Drinking alcohol more than the recommended limits
- Excess fat in the liver if you are overweight or have diabetes
- Certain medications, supplements, and natural or herbal remedies

Liver damage can lead to livers that are inflamed, shrunken, hard, or scarred. Damaged livers do not work well. You can get very sick, or even die, if your liver stops working altogether.



Keeping your liver healthy

Here are some things you can do to keep your liver healthy:

- Limit alcohol. Alcohol from any type of drink (wine, beer, hard liquor) can cause liver damage. Alcohol can make liver diseases such as hepatitis much worse. If you have cirrhosis, no amount of alcohol is safe. If you need help to stop or reduce your drinking, ask your VA provider or visit www.mentalhealth.va.gov/mentalhealth/substance-use/index.asp.
- Maintain a healthy body weight. For support, check out the MOVE! Program.
- Talk to your VA provider about how to keep your cholesterol levels at the recommended level

- Control your blood sugars if you have diabetes.
- Reduce your risk for hepatitis B and C:
 - » Don't share any personal items such as razors or toothbrushes that might have blood on them.
 - » If you inject drugs, make sure you use clean equipment every time. If you need help to stop or reduce your drug use, ask your VA provider.
 - » Practice safer sex (use condoms, reduce your number of partners).
 - » Ask your provider about getting vaccinated against hepatitis B.
- Reduce your risk for hepatitis A infection:
 - » Ask your provider about getting vaccinated against hepatitis A.
- Tell your provider about all medications you are taking. Always take your medications as prescribed.
- Tell your provider about any over-the-counter medicines, supplements, and natural or herbal remedies that you use. Avoid herbal supplements.
- Certain medicines taken at the same time can cause damage to your liver, even if you can buy them without a prescription. For example, make sure you don't take too much Tylenol® (acetaminophen), and never take Tylenol® with alcohol. Many over the counter medicines contain Tylenol®.

Scan to visit www.hepatitis.va.gov for more information:

